

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming method, comprising:

randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set to an array of image sites in a primary game;

determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline within said array; and

determining whether a triggering event is present in at least one of said at least one selected payline and at a predetermined or prespecified trigger site of said array and, if said triggering event is present, awarding an option of initiating a bonus game similar in type to said primary game.

2. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning cards from a deck of cards to said array of image sites.

3. The gaming method of claim 2, further comprising randomly replacing at least one selected card with another undealt card from said deck.

4. The gaming method of claim 2, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether at least one specific poker combination is present on at least one selected payline across said array.

5. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning reel type slot machine symbols to said array.

6. The gaming method of claim 5, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether a predetermined number of symbols are the same on at least one selected payline across said array.

7. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present in at least one selected payline.

8. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a specific combination of symbols is present along at least one selected payline.

9. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether said triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present at a predetermined or preselected trigger location.

10. The gaming method of claim 1, further comprising initiating a bonus event if said triggering event is present.

11. The gaming method of claim 10, wherein said initiating said bonus event comprises initiating a bonus game.

12. The gaming method of claim 10, further comprising using symbols of said predetermined set in said bonus game.

13. The gaming method of claim 10, further comprising using symbols differing at least in part from said predetermined set in said bonus game.

14. The gaming method of claim 10, wherein said initiating said bonus event comprises increasing an award if one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

15. The gaming method of claim 1, further comprising providing an award if at least one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

16. The gaming method of claim 15, wherein said providing said award comprises providing at least one of money, monetary credit, tournament qualification points, or tournament points.

17. The gaming method of claim 15, further comprising, if said triggering event is present, permitting a player to initiate a bonus event in lieu of receiving said award.

18. The gaming method of claim 1, further comprising, if said triggering event is present and a player makes a wager, permitting the player to initiate a bonus event.

19. The gaming method of claim 1, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

20. A gaming method, comprising:  
randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set to an array of image sites;  
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline across said array;  
determining whether a first triggering event is present in at least one selected payline across said array; and  
determining whether a second triggering event is present at a trigger location of said array.

21. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning cards from a deck of cards to said array of image sites.

22. The gaming method of claim 21, further comprising replacing at least one selected card with another undealt card from said deck.

23. The gaming method of claim 21, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether at least one specific poker combination is present on at least one selected payline within said array.

24. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said randomly assigning symbols comprises randomly assigning reel type slot machine symbols to said array.

25. The gaming method of claim 24, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether a predetermined number of symbols are the same on at least one selected payline across said array.

26. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether said first triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present in at least one selected payline.

27. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether said first triggering event is present comprises determining whether a specific combination of symbols is present along at least one selected payline.

28. The gaming method of claim 20, further comprising initiating a bonus game if said first triggering event occurs.

29. The gaming method of claim 28, further comprising using symbols of said predetermined set in said bonus game.

30. The gaming method of claim 28, further comprising using symbols differing at least in part from said predetermined set in said bonus game.

31. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether said second triggering event is present comprises determining whether a predetermined or preselected trigger symbol is present at a predetermined or preselected trigger location.

32. The gaming method of claim 31, further comprising initiating a bonus event if said second triggering event occurs.

33. The gaming method of claim 32, wherein said initiating said bonus event comprises increasing an award if one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

34. The gaming method of claim 20, further comprising providing an award if at least one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline.

35. The gaming method of claim 34, wherein said providing said award comprises providing at least one of money, monetary credit, tournament qualification points, or tournament points.

36. The gaming method of claim 34, further comprising, if said first triggering event occurs, permitting a player to initiate a bonus game in lieu of receiving said award.

37. The gaming method of claim 20, further comprising, if said triggering event is present and a player makes a wager, permitting the player to initiate a bonus game.

38. The gaming method of claim 20, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

39. A gaming method, comprising:  
randomly assigning symbols from a predetermined set for use with a game of a first type to an array of image sites in a primary game;  
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one selected payline across said array and, if so, making an award available for said primary game;  
determining whether a triggering event is present in at least one selected payline within said array and, if so, at least providing a player with an option to proceed to a bonus game similar in type to said primary game.

40. The gaming method of claim 39, further comprising, if said triggering event is present, initiating said bonus game.

41. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises initiating a bonus game of said first type.

42. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises initiating a bonus game of a second, different type.

43. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises:  
assigning symbols to image locations of a bonus payline; and  
determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in said bonus payline.

44. The gaming method of claim 43, wherein said assigning symbols comprises: assigning symbols from a corresponding selected payline to said image symbols of said bonus payline; permitting a player to select at least one image location at which a corresponding symbol is to be held; and replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected symbol.

45. The gaming method of claim 44, wherein said replacing comprises replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected, previously unused symbol from said predetermined set.

46. The gaming method of claim 44, wherein said replacing comprises replacing said symbol at each unselected image location of said bonus payline with a randomly selected symbol from another set.

47. The gaming method of claim 39, wherein said determining whether one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present comprises determining whether one of a plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present in at least one payline selected in response to placement of a wager thereon.

48. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating is effected responsive to placement of an additional wager.

49. The gaming method of claim 40, wherein said initiating is effected if a player chooses to play said bonus game in lieu of receiving said award if one of said plurality of winning combinations of symbols is present.

50. A gaming device, comprising:

at least one processor including:

a first logic circuit configured to, in a primary game, randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites;

a second logic circuit configured to identify at least one selected payline;

a third logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;

a fourth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a first trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and

a fifth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a second trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said array;

memory associated with said at least one processor;

at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and

a display in communication with said at least one processor.

51. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said symbols comprise card symbols and said predetermined set comprises a digital deck of cards.

52. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said symbols comprise slot machine symbols.

53. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said at least one selected payline comprises a payline upon which a wager has been placed.

54. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises a winning poker hand.

55. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

56. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said first trigger event comprises the presence of a trigger symbol in said at least one selected payline.

57. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said first trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or prespecified combination of symbols along said at least one selected payline.

58. The gaming device of claim 50, further comprising a sixth logic circuit configured to initiate a bonus game if said first trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline.

59. The gaming device of claim 58, wherein said bonus game is similar in type to said primary game.

60. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said second trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or preselected trigger card at said predetermined or preselected trigger site.

61. The gaming device of claim 50, further comprising a seventh logic circuit configured to increase an award by a predetermined or preselected amount if said second trigger event occurs.

62. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein said at least one processor, said memory, said at least one input element, and said display are contained within a single housing.

63. The gaming device of claim 50, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way signals transported along carrier waves, to show said array, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites.

64. The gaming device of claim 63, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said first trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said a bonus game.

65. The gaming device of claim 50, further comprising a communication component configured to facilitate communication between said at least one processor and at least one processor of at least one of another gaming device and a central computer.

66. A gaming device, comprising:  
at least one processor including:  
a first logic circuit configured, in a primary game of a first type, to randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites;  
a second logic circuit configured to identify at least one selected payline;  
a third logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;  
a fourth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether a trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and  
a fifth logic circuit configured to initiate a bonus game of said first type if said trigger event has occurred;  
memory associated with said at least one processor;  
at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and  
a display in communication with said at least one processor.

67. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said symbols comprise card symbols and said predetermined set comprises a digital deck of cards.

68. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said symbols comprise slot machine symbols.

69. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said at least one selected payline comprises a payline upon which a wager has been placed.

70. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises a winning poker hand.

71. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

72. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a trigger symbol in said at least one selected payline.

73. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or prespecified combination of symbols along said at least one selected payline.

74. The gaming device of claim 66, further comprising a sixth logic circuit configured to evaluate whether another trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said array.

75. The gaming device of claim 74, wherein said another trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or preselected trigger card at said predetermined or preselected trigger site.

76. The gaming device of claim 74, further comprising a seventh logic circuit configured to increase an award by a predetermined or preselected amount if said another trigger event occurs.

77. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein said at least one processor, said memory, said at least one input element, and said display are contained within a single housing.

78. The gaming device of claim 66, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said array, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites.

79. The gaming device of claim 78, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said first trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said a bonus game.

80. The gaming device of claim 66, further comprising a communication component configured to facilitate communication between said at least one processor and at least one processor of at least one of another gaming device and a central computer.

81. A gaming device, comprising:  
at least one processor programmed to:

randomly assign symbols from a predetermined set to a plurality of image sites;  
identify at least one selected payline;

evaluate whether a winning combination of symbols exists upon said at least one selected payline;

evaluate whether a trigger event has occurred along at least one selected payline; and

initiate a bonus game of said first type if said trigger event has occurred;

memory associated with said at least one processor;

at least one input element in communication with said at least one processor; and

a display in communication with said at least one processor.

82. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said symbols comprise card symbols and said predetermined set comprises a digital deck of cards.

83. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said symbols comprise slot machine symbols.

84. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one selected payline comprises a payline upon which a wager has been placed.

85. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises a winning poker hand.

86. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said winning combination of symbols comprises at least predetermined number of like symbols or a combination of like symbols and wild symbols.

87. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a trigger symbol in said at least one selected payline.

88. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or prespecified combination of symbols along said at least one selected payline.

89. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one processor is further programmed to evaluate whether another trigger event has occurred at a predetermined or preselected trigger site of said array.

90. The gaming device of claim 89, wherein said another trigger event comprises the presence of a predetermined or preselected trigger card at said predetermined or preselected trigger site.

91. The gaming device of claim 89, wherein said at least one processor is further programmed to increase an award by a predetermined or preselected amount if said another trigger event occurs.

92. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein said at least one processor, said memory, said at least one input element, and said display are contained within a single housing.

93. The gaming device of claim 81, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said first logic circuit, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display, by way of signals transported along carrier waves, to show said array, including symbols at their respective, assigned image sites.

94. The gaming device of claim 93, wherein, following or concurrently with operation of said fourth logic circuit, if said first trigger event has occurred, said at least one processor is programmed to cause said display to depict said a bonus game.

95. The gaming device of claim 81, further comprising a communication component configured to facilitate communication between said at least one processor and at least one processor of at least one of another gaming device and a central computer.

96. A gaming method, comprising:

responsive to placement of a wager, initiating a primary game by allowing a player to select at least one selected payline from a plurality of available paylines of an array of image sites; randomly assigning symbols to said array of image sites;

evaluating each selected payline to determine whether at least one winning combination of symbols is present thereon and, if at least one winning combination is present on a selected payline, providing an award to the player;

evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger event has occurred;

for each selected payline on which a trigger event has occurred, initiating a bonus game on a bonus payline, said bonus game including altering replacing a symbol at at least one image site of said selected payline; and

evaluating said bonus payline to determine whether at least one winning combination of symbols is present thereon and, if at least one winning combination is present on said bonus payline, providing a bonus award to the player.

97. The gaming method of claim 96, wherein said initiating said primary game comprises initiating a stud poker game.

98. The gaming method of claim 97, wherein said evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger event has occurred comprises evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger card is present thereon.

99. The gaming method of claim 98, wherein said evaluating each selected payline to determine whether a trigger card is present thereon comprises evaluating each selected payline to determine whether an “Ace of Spades” symbol appears thereon.

100. The gaming method of claim 98, wherein said initiating said bonus game comprises initiating a draw poker game.